

# Freedom Watch

April 17, 2003 ❖ Published in the interest of those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom ❖ Bagram, Afghanistan



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti

## Steel reinforcement ...

*An Afghan worker drills holes for the new reinforced door for finance in Motel 6.*

## New policy eases the pain of medical flight procedures

Story by Pfc. Christina Carde  
11<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – Troops who need medical care beyond what Bagram can provide, no longer have to wait for a seat on a medical evacuation flight.

This is due to a new policy that helps outpatients receive the care they need quickly and effectively.

According to the new policy, any patient who is not considered urgent or priority, but must still go to Germany for further examination, must fly as a routine passenger on a regular flight and can no longer be accompanied by medical evacuation teams.

“This policy was implemented because patients who needed to go to Germany for things such as magnetic resonance imaging screening, were flying on medical evacuation flights mainly reserved for urgent or priority patients,” said Air Force Capt. Randy Ivall, officer in charge of aeromedical operations, 438<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squad. “This was a problem because we would have to send whole medical evacuation teams to accompany

—See **POLICY**, Page 5

## Marine today, Olympic hopeful tomorrow

Story by Pvt. Terri Rorke  
11<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – “Everybody sweats. Everybody bleeds,” said the Marine martial arts instructor, sitting against the table with his defined arms crossed.

Cpl. Matthew A. Hepner, 513 Fixed Wing Aircraft, Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz., is a Marine Corps Martial Arts Program instructor, who has been practicing martial arts since he was four.

“It’s a building block program designed to fit any (physical training) program. It’s fun,

exciting and strenuous,” said the instructor about the art he teaches.

Hepner, who is also an AV-8B avionics technician, has trained more than 200 servicemembers here to be at least tan-belt qualified in mixed martial arts, he said. MMA is a mix of judo, aikido, karate, American-style boxing among other types of fighting techniques.

“Fighting is exhausting,” said the soft-spoken corporal.

But this thought doesn’t stop the second-degree black belt Judo qualified trainer from doing what he has been doing for just



Courtesy photo

*Hepner displays one of his tricks during a training session here. The sessions include lots of combat drills, said Hepner.*

—See **MARINE**, Page 4

# World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



*A vandalized portrait of Saddam Hussein in the center of Mosul, northern Iraq.*

## Web chat debates Saddam's fate

**WASHINGTON** — White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card said during an online question-and-answer session Wednesday that he thought Saddam Hussein was dead.

White House spokesman Adam Levine said Card was only speculating and that there is no definite proof of Saddam's demise. He added that many senior White House officials believe the Iraqi leader was killed during the war.

Card was the first administration official to take part in an online discussion sponsored by the White House and on its official Web site.

According to the White House Web site transcript, Card was asked by a caller from Quincy, Massachusetts: "Is there any new information on the location of Saddam Hussein? And can the war be deemed successful in terms of eliminating the security threat to the United States and other countries if Saddam is not killed or captured?"

Card, a former Transportation Secretary, answered: "He is not likely to be in Quincy, Braintree, or my hometown of Holbrook. I think he is dead. The good news is that his regime is no longer a threat to the people of Iraq nor to the U.S. or our allies."

Levine said Card, who attends the president's daily national security briefings, was offering his honest opinion — "that he thinks, he believes he is dead."

## U.S.: Ex-Iraqi intel chief in Syria

**WASHINGTON** — Despite the Syrian government's continued denials, U.S. offi-

cials were adamant Wednesday that Farouk Hijazi, former chief of Saddam Hussein's Mukhabbarat intelligence service, is in Syria.

One knowledgeable U.S. official said specifically that Hijazi arrived Tuesday in Syria "on a direct flight from Tunis."

Hijazi entered Syria on an Iraqi diplomatic passport, U.S. officials said. Hijazi had most recently been Iraq's ambassador to Tunisia. The Syrian Foreign Ministry denied the claims Wednesday.

Some U.S. officials have expressed anger at the Syrians for allegedly harboring Hijazi, because he is suspected of involvement in the unsuccessful plot by Iraqi intelligence to kill former President George H.W. Bush, the president's father, in Kuwait in 1993.

Hijazi had asked for permission to enter Syria, but his request was denied, Syrian officials told reporters. They said they don't know where he went after the collapse of Saddam's government.

U.S. officials have increased the pressure on Damascus in recent days over the accusation that Syria is harboring fleeing members of Saddam's former regime.

## U.S. mulls legal options after Abbas capture

**WASHINGTON** — U.S. officials evaluated their options Wednesday now that the United States has custody of a big name terrorist, albeit one whose most infamous act took place nearly two decades ago.

U.S. Special Forces found Palestinian activist Muhammed "Abu" Abbas in Baghdad Monday night, according to U.S. Central Command.

Abbas heads the Palestinian Liberation Front, the offshoot of the Palestinian Liberation Organization that staged the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro, killing a disabled American Jew and dumping his body and wheelchair overboard.

The killing of Leon Klinghoffer, 69, sparked outrage in the Western world.

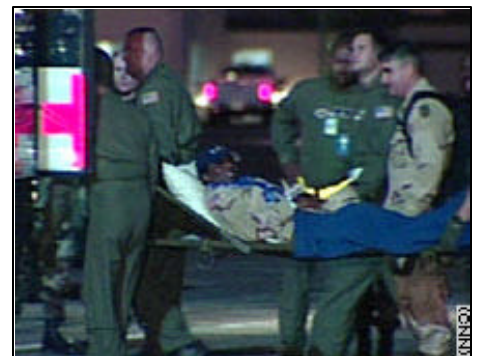
With Abbas in custody, U.S. officials must decide what to do with him.

He was convicted in absentia in Italy and

sentenced to life in prison, and Italian Justice Minister Roberto Castelli said Wednesday Italy would seek the convicted terrorist's extradition to serve the sentence.

The United States could bring its own charges against Abbas, although a criminal complaint filed against him in 1986 was dropped a short time later without an indictment.

Officials said Wednesday new charges against Abbas would probably have to entail new evidence.



*Army Spc. Shoshana Johnson was carried off an Air Force C-141 aircraft Wednesday.*

## Former U.S. POWs in Germany

**RAMSTEIN AIR BASE**, Germany — Seven U.S. soldiers held as Iraqi prisoners of war left the Middle East and arrived in Germany late Wednesday for treatment at a U.S. military hospital.

A U.S. Air Force C-141 cargo plane, specially adapted to carry injured passengers, landed around 10:30 p.m. (4:30 p.m. EDT) with 48 people aboard, 19 of whom suffer combat injuries.

They were expected to be taken to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for treatment and counseling.

Six of the seven former prisoners walked swiftly off the plane, dressed in desert fatigues, and shook the hand of the air base commander, U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel.

They waved to news media cameras, then boarded a bus.

The seventh former POW, Army Spc. Shoshana Johnson, 30, was carried off the plane in a stretcher and lifted into the back of the bus.



# U.S. News (Compiled from CNN.com)



*A coroner and investigators load the decomposed remains of a woman's body into a van at Point Isabel Regional Park in Richmond, California.*

## Forensic expert studying remains

**MARTINEZ, Calif.** — A forensic anthropologist is examining the recently recovered remains of an adult female that washed ashore at Point Isabel Regional Park on San Francisco Bay, Contra Costa County coroner's office spokesman Jimmy Lee said Wednesday.

The expert should be able to tell the age and race of the person, Lee said. She will also try to determine what happened to the body after death and while it was in the water.

The Contra Costa County coroner's office also is trying to determine if there is a relationship between the female and the body of a full-term baby boy found Sunday.

A passerby discovered the badly decomposed remains Monday less than 2 miles away from where those of a baby boy were found a day earlier. The corpses were about 80 miles west of Modesto, California, the home city of Laci Peterson, who was pregnant when she disappeared Christmas Eve.

The recovery of the bodies has fueled speculation that the remains may be Peterson and her unborn son she was due to deliver February 10 and planned to name Connor.

Modesto police recently reclassified the Peterson case as a homicide.

## Terror threat lowered to Yellow

**WASHINGTON** — Twenty-nine days after raising the national threat level to Orange, or high, the Department of Homeland Security on Wednesday reduced the level one notch to Yellow, or elevated.

New York City is to remain on Orange alert, and airspace restrictions for Washington and New York introduced during the war against Iraq will remain in place but under review.

The threat level was raised from elevated to high at 8 p.m. on March 17, when U.S. President George W. Bush gave Saddam Hussein 48 hours to step down as the leader of Iraq.

At that time, the White House said intelligence from many sources indicated the al Qaeda terror group might attempt to launch attacks against U.S. interests, claiming it was defending Muslims or Iraqis.

In a written statement, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge said the decision to lower the risk level followed a review of intelligence and an assessment of the threats by the intelligence community.

## Pentagon estimates cost of war: \$20 billion and running

**WASHINGTON** — The war in Iraq has cost the United States \$20 billion to date and that figure is growing by about \$2 billion a month, the Pentagon's comptroller said Wednesday.

Comptroller Dov Zakheim said about \$10 billion has gone to military operations, close to \$3 billion has gone toward munition purchases and the rest has been spent on personnel support. The cost of ongoing military operations in Iraq could cost about another \$2 billion per month, Zakheim said.

He could not offer figures on the cost of the reconstruction of Iraq, saying only that it would depend on the number of U.S. troops that would remain and what countries might donate to the rebuilding costs.

The cost estimates came during a Pentagon briefing on the 2003 budget supplemental that covered initial war costs, signed earlier Wednesday by President Bush.

The supplemental provides about \$63

billion for war operations and another \$10.5 billion for assistance, relief and reconstruction.

## Boy caught in electric window dies

**DANVILLE, Ind.** — An 11-year-old boy who left a music program at an elementary school to play in the parking lot was found dead, trapped between a car's electric window and the door frame.

Mitchell L. Johnson was attending his brother's fourth-grade class presentation at Danville South Elementary when he became bored and left with keys to his mother's car.

Police said his family found him dead after the program concluded Tuesday evening.

"We believe he may have somehow pushed the button and the window came up and trapped his head," police Lt. Jerry Cunningham said.

The coroner said the death was an accidental suffocation and police said there were no signs of foul play.

## Senator's daughter found dead

**MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C.** — A daughter of Sen. Ernest Hollings was found dead on the floor of her home, authorities said. There were no signs of foul play.

Salley Hollings, 46, was found Tuesday morning by her 12-year-old daughter, said Charleston County Coroner Susan Chewning.

There was no immediate indication of the cause of death, and it appeared that she had been dead for several hours. Autopsy results could take weeks, Chewning said Wednesday.

"You treat every case the same and keep an open mind on the possibilities until tests come in," Chewning said. The 81-year-old senator was in South Carolina during the Senate's recess and had planned to see his daughter and granddaughter.

"It's tough, but we're going to make it," he said Tuesday night. "You just have to believe in the Lord and keep on going."

Hollings has been senator since 1966. The death of his daughter, one of four children, is the latest in a series of personal tragedies in recent years.

## MARINE, from Page 1

about his entire existence.

"It just became my way of life," said Hepner, whose nickname is 'Judo chop.'

Throughout his life, he said he constantly trained. If he didn't place in a competition he won them. His accomplishments range everything from placing fourth and fifth in high school national events to placing second in the Sept. 2001 All Armed Forces Championship at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he was the only Marine to medal at the event. But all of his competitions came to a standstill when he decided to join the U.S. Marine Corps. He said he joined the Corps because of what it stood for: being the best of the best. Plus his grandfather was a Marine. "He is the strongest man I know."

Today he is here, deployed now for more than six months, and working towards his ultimate goal of competing in the 2008 Olympics on the Judo team.

Because of the new Marine Corps stop loss policy, he has no idea when he will re-deploy. So, he is currently trying to return to the states by his end of tour date in June to move to Colorado Springs where he would attend the Olympic Training Center to be an Olympic hopeful on the team.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I may never have another chance to become a champion fighter, or an Olympic contender. Many Marines who are nearing the end of their enlistments have plans for the future.

Some of them have plans for college, others to join a corporation and enter the work force, still some even plan on starting their own business.

These are all noble plans and grand ideas, but can be done during the phase of a person's life.

My future does not allow me that luxury," writes Hepner in his letter of request to discharge when his 4-year contract ends.

He said every day is vital to getting towards his goal, as he is nearing his peak of performance as a fighter.

While he waits for approval of his request, he currently instructs Marines every week on his skill. There is a tentative plan for him to teach Norwegian embassy soldiers in Kabul also, he said.

## Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "Stranded."

When a band of aliens crashes to Earth, a girl and her grandmother find they are in more danger from the local police trying to protect them than they are from the not-so-unhuman creatures who are only trying to flee their enemy.

Tomorrow's movie will be "Wild Thornberry's movie."



## Local weather

### TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Friday</i>
<b><u>Bagram:</u></b>	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 73F L: 43F	<i>Scattered showers</i> H: 64F L: 54F
<b><u>Kandahar:</u></b>	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 86F L: 57F	<i>Scattered showers</i> H: 82F L: 60F
<b><u>Kabul:</u></b>	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 64F L: 41F	<i>Scattered showers</i> H: 63F L: 2554F
<b><u>Uzbekistan:</u></b>	<i>Mostly cloudy</i> H: 56F L: 40F	<i>Scattered showers</i> H: 52F L: 37F

*Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team*

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## POLICY, from Page 1

them. With everything that is going on between here and Iraq, we just don't have the manpower." According to Ivall, the new policy facilitates both outpatient and inpatient problems a lot better than before.

"When a patient needs to fly to Germany for further examination, and they are considered an outpatient case, they must first fill out a medical passenger acceptance form to be placed on a routine flight," said Ivall.

"Even though the flight is considered routine, the form will give them priority on the aircraft. Otherwise, they would have to wait up to 72 hours for a flight reserved for urgent and priority medical evacuation." "This helps everyone involved," added Ivall.

"It ensures medical evacuation teams and flights are reserved for urgent cases, and it also ensures outpatient needs are met but giving them priority on routine flights. Now, a soldier can just go to movement control with this form, and get on the next available flight." Aside from the acceptance form acting as a passport, it also works as a tracking and coordination device.

"The form provides a phone number to the combat support hospital just in case the servicemember has any questions while out of theater," said Maj. James Meyer, medical regulating officer and chief of patient administration, 48<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, Task Force-44. "It also requires a commander's signature and that the servicemember contacts their unit daily while out of theater.

"This helps the hospital keep track of the patient's status and assists the unit commander in keeping track of the servicemember at all times, according to Ivall and Meyer.

One of the main reasons for the policy change is to increase mission success and enhance soldier readiness.

"The main goal in separating in and outpatient cases is to effectively treat urgent medical problems and return healthy, able soldiers back to duty," said Meyer.

"The most important part of our mission is making sure soldiers are fit to fight so they can finish theirs."



# Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



## Wings shooting for one, hoping for four ...

*The Wings just want to go home — for Game 5. The Ducks can send the Cup champs home with a win in Game 4. The Detroit Red Wings have the talent to win four straight games and overcome their 3-0 first-round deficit against the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. But since it has only happened twice in Stanley Cup playoff history, the odds are against it. Regardless, the Red Wings' mindset is not to win four games; it's to win one and get back to Detroit.*



## 2002 National Hockey League standings

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic

(2) New Jersey	108 pts
(4) Philadelphia	107 pts
Pittsburgh	65 pts
N.Y. Rangers	78 pts
N.Y. Islanders	83 pts

#### Northeast

(1) Ottawa	113 pts
(7) Boston	87 pts
(5) Toronto	98 pts
Montreal	77 pts
Buffalo	72 pts

#### Southeast

(3) Tampa Bay	93 pts
Carolina	61 pts
(6) Washington	92 pts
Florida	70 pts
Atlanta	74 pts

### Western Conference

#### Central

(2) Detroit	110 pts
(5) St. Louis	99 pts
Chicago	79 pts
Columbus	69 pts
Nashville	74 pts

#### Northwest

(4) Vancouver	104 pts
(6) Minnesota	95 pts
(8) Edmonton	92 pts
(3) Colorado	105 pts
Calgary	75 pts

#### Pacific

(1) Dallas	111 pts
(7) Anaheim	95 pts
Los Angeles	78 pts
San Jose	73 pts
Phoenix	78 pts



## Sens take control of Game 4 in first minute

UNIONDALE, N.Y. — The Ottawa Senators took charge almost as soon as they took the ice, and made sure they took control of their playoff series against the New York Islanders.

Mike Fisher scored just 28 seconds in, and Anton Volchenkov had a goal less than four minutes later as the Senators took an early lead and made it stand up in a 3-1 victory Wednesday night as Ottawa went up 3-1 in the first-round, best-of-seven series.

"We got those two quick goals, and that made it just a great game for us," said Ottawa goalie Patrick Lalime, who faced just 22 shots. "I wasn't too busy. They had a few chances, but our defense and penalty killing was great."

Marian Hossa had a goal and an assist for Ottawa, which will try to wrap up the Eastern Conference series at home Thursday night.

## Mogilny scratched for Game 4

TORONTO — Alexander Mogilny was scratched from Game 4 of Toronto's playoff series against the Philadelphia Flyers on Wednesday night because of concussion-like symptoms.



Mogilny

Mogilny, who has five goals in three games, left the Maple Leafs' 4-3 double-overtime victory Monday after being hit in the face with a high stick. He was bloodied and appeared woozy after the hit.

Coach Pat Quinn thought Mogilny would be able to play, but doctors decided to keep him from playing after he underwent further tests late Tuesday.

The Maple Leafs lead the best-of-seven series 2-1.

"He had a downturn yesterday," Quinn said. "There were enough symptoms to say he should not play tonight."

They are taking a precaution."

Quinn said Mogilny will undergo more tests Thursday.

He didn't know whether Mogilny will be available for Game 5 on Saturday.

## Oilers winger out with fractured hand

EDMONTON, Alberta — The underdog Edmonton Oilers were looking for a break heading into Dallas with the series tied 2-2, but they don't like the one they got.

As they were boarding the plane for Dallas on Wednesday, the players learned they had lost Czech sniper Radek Dvorak indefinitely with a broken hand.

It was a crushing blow for the club that has twice fumbled opportunities to get two games ahead of the Western Conference champion Stars in the quarterfinal playoff series.

Dvorak, whose highlight reel goal won Game 3 for the Oilers, broke his right hand when he missed his attempt to check Jere Lehtinen midway through the third period in the Oilers 3-1 loss to the Stars on Tuesday.

He was scheduled for surgery Wednesday.

"It's going to be a significant loss for us, the way he was playing," conceded coach Craig MacTavish.

"He won us a hockey game with a great goal. He is the type

of game-breaking player we've been trying to get for awhile around here."

The Oilers acquired Dvorak and Cory Cross in a trade deadline deal that sent Anson Carter and Ales Pisa to the New York Rangers.

## Patrick: We needed to make a change

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Penguins are looking for a new coach who is comfortable working with no-names and prospects, not superstars.

The Penguins, virtually stripped of the big names that made them a playoff team for 10 years, fired coach Rick Kehoe on Tuesday and began looking for a replacement who understands winning won't come easily, or

immediately.

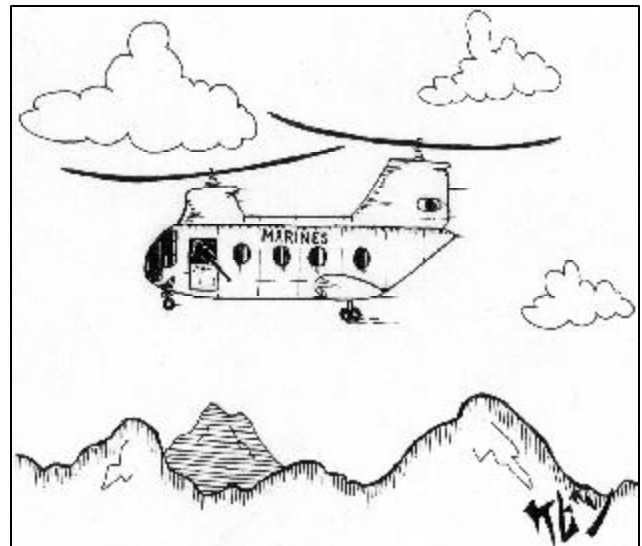
Kehoe's record of 55-81-14-10 was the worst of any Penguins coach since the mid-1980s, and he was the first since Bob Berry (1984-87) to miss the playoffs in consecutive seasons.

The Penguins were 27-44-6-5 this season, their worst record since Mario Lemieux's rookie season in 1984-85.

Still, Kehoe was all but absolved of blame by general manager Craig Patrick, who said the team's moneysaving moves all but made losing inevitable.

The Penguins have traded away or lost stars Jaromir Jagr, Alexei Kovalev, Robert Lang the last two years, leaving a cast of little-known players and developing prospects, many of whom are still in the minors.

*"Today's in-flight meal will consist of cold MRE's and luke-warm water. Thanks again for flying Marine Air."*



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By Kevin Kilgore

## Laugh Support